

The slides and other materials I have selected to show the committee illustrate some of the concerns I've had as an artist and some of the projects I've worked on which I believe qualify me to participate in the development of a work of art for the new federal building in San Jose.

My roots are in Baja California. My parents migrated to Los Angeles from there and I was the last of five brothers and sisters. (1) As a boy I saw some cave paintings on my uncle's ranch in the mountains of San Francisco in Baja California.

(2) I was not only impressed with their size (some of the figures were more than 10 feet tall) and inaccessibility, but also (3) the fact that no one knew who painted them or when they were done.

My uncles dismissed them as "chingaderitas de los indios." I didn't think much about them until later, as an artist I began to explore public mural space.

(4) At 18, I painted and installed the four apostles in the cupola of this church, the Mission of San Ignacio Kadakamen.

(5) The Mission lies in a volcanic river bed in Baja California populated with date trees planted by the early Jesuits. We had to use the timbers from these trees to build the scaffold to reach the top of the cupola where the paintings were replacing some badly deteriorated colonial paintings. I do not have slides of these paintings. They were copies of the old paintings. To this day they adorn the cupola of the church.

(6) As an undergraduate at U.C.L.A. I took a year off from school and went to study in Madrid, Spain. I studied with Antonio Valles, a polychromé wood sculptor. I did this copy of Hieronymus Bosch's "Temptation of Saint Anthony" in the Prado Museum while working under his direction. (7) In the afternoons, I helped him in the repainting and reconstruction of a side altar in the Church of San Francisco Grande in Madrid (8). Under his direction I learned the ancient art of retablo painting and polychromé wood sculpture. (9) Here is a life size head carved from hard wood and painted in the traditional technique.

(10) In 1966 my wife Sheila, our five-year old daughter Juliette,

and myself moved to La Paz, Baja California, the home of my paternal grandfather. With the help of a small grant from the Copley Foundation and the Mexican government (11) that provided us this unused warehouse, we (12) began the Centro de Arte Regional where weaving and (13) pottery were taught and produced. (14) I was assisted by Daniel Zenteno, a Zatopec potter from Oaxaca and (15) Fortunato Sila Moreno, a weaver from Celaya. Both Daniel and Fortunato were masters of self-sufficiency. (16) We built all our own equipment, potter's wheels, and (17) kilns without the use of electricity. We took on apprentices who learned every step of the operation. They were paid a small stipend and shared in the sales of our products. (18) We dug our own clay and other materials and ground them in this home-made grinder powered by an old model 'A' motor. (19) Our looms were hand built. Even the gears were cut out by hand. (20) We carded and hand-spun cotton and wool and dyed it in an old bathtub. (21) Here is a shot of Fortunato spinning (22) and another of Fortunato cutting a piece of completed fabric from

his home-made loom.(23) We sold our products in a small (24) store we had on the way to the airport. (25) We also made and sold a variety of other crafts. I refer you to the catalogue from the Centro included in my portfolio. (26) Here as an example of my ceramics, a mask done in relief and covered partially with a dark burnished slip and (27) a hand-built tripoded funerary urn with slip decoration. Both pieces are fired in the open without use of a kiln. Though I left the Centro in 1969 it continues to be a viable program for craftsmen of Baja California. Daniel still does his pottery and Fortunato has a shop on the other end of town. I returned to the U.S. accepting a teaching position in drawing and painting at Northridge State.⁽²⁸⁾▲ The civil rights movement was in full swing and so was the Chicano Movement. (29) In the Fall of 1970, a news reporter was shot and killed during a march in East L.A. Many of us got more than a few whiffs of tear gas and had to spend a night or two in jail for failing to disperse. (30) Four painters from U.C.L.A.

(Carrillo, Hernandez, Noriega and Solache) painted a mural entitled "Chicano History" weeks before in the Chicano Library in Campbell Hall at U.C.L.A. (31) though we knew little of mural composition (32). How well it expressed the drama and spirit of the times as far as what was happening in the Chicano/Mexican Community.

Beginning in the 1970's I started working seriously in mural scaled works and the themes. (33) Here is a detail of "Las Tropicanas," a 7' x 11' oil on panel completed in 1972. It shows a scaley skinned, spiney backed creature (34) emerging from the center of the painting complete with a chorus of Mexican skeletons. (35) This group appears before a party of nudes assembled on the balcony of a modern condominium apartment. A rites of passage to the underworld is taking place and the depiction of skeletons, animals, and figures has to do with a Nahuatl conception of time and space. (36) The paint is applied in a heavy impasto and glazed over with thin veils of pigment. (37) The skeletons are painted loosely and with humor, with more

attention to gesture than anatomical accuracy. (38) Spatial tension is created by drawing as well as by the gestures of the figures. (39) I wanted a kind of deep space with a receding floor plane "a la Mantegna." (40) Psychological tension is created between a fallen archer (a reference to Diana the huntress) and (41) a turtle who has wandered onto the scene. (42) Studies were done from models (43) then transferred to the panel. (44) Egyptian art is alluded to in this figure on the far right with (46) breastplate and (45) long wavy hair. "Las Tropicanas" has been shown in many U.S. museums, including the New Museum in New York where it was in an exhibit entitled "Bad Painting," and the Everson Museum and other museums where it was part of a traveling show of Hispanic art entitled "Ancient Roots/New Visions." (See vita)

(47) In 1976 I completed a 2500 sq. ft. politec mural in a public corridor in Santa Cruz. The mural has a theme of "Birth, Death and Regeneration." Again Mexican symbolism is made use of and the mural is inspired by the works of Alfaro Siquieros. (48) These are slides of the birth sequence. It is painted on the

ceiling of the 40' x 8' corridor and shows the birth of the corn god. The mother figure is seated on the Mexican cross or "olin," the symbol of movement on the Mexican calendar. (49)

Here the head of the corn god peaks out of his protective covering. (50) The death sequence shows the indian corn god tied to a crucifix in symbolic sacrifice (51). This scene is painted at one end of the corridor with an exit to a parking lot and the county jail which is the adjacent building. (52) Here is a preparatory drawing for the crucifixion. (53) At the foot of the cross is a stand of corn. (54) The corn is fertilized by fish which float about the base of the cornstocks. (55) On one side of the wall is a fisherman (56) emptying his nets of fish in a ritual offering. (57) On the other side wall is the regenerative symbol of a lively skeleton with (58) butterfly wings covering the pelvis area, a symbol of the metamorphosis of life. (59) There is a lot of painting in this mural, lots of glazing, as shown in this detail of surf, seaweed on the beach, and floating bottle. It took 8 months to complete and many students

and community members worked on it. (60) Here is a detail of a trunk which is tied to and being dragged by the skeleton. (61)

We now see the devotional figure with outstretched arms painted at the indoor end of the corridor. A boat load of monks carrying a cross cutting through the surf is seen over the outstretched arm. (62) The devotional figure's chest is handled more abstractly. I wanted to create a ship-like form emerging from the waves (63) and of course the Siquieros-like handling of corners and exaggeration zapped those who happened through this corridor. (64)

In February 1979 the management of the building had the painting covered calling it an "attractive nuisance" which attracted hippies and students. Despite much public outcry (see news items in portfolio), the management has elected to not restore the painting. (65)

In 1978 I was awarded an individual artist's grant from the N.E.A. Included in my application were five slides of this mural. (66)

In 1977 I painted this 17' high x 11' wide portable mural. The materials are politec on pieced canvas (67) and the theme deals with ritual sacrifice. (68) The executioner

is a third world figure. Tents are seen in the background.

(69) Above a fire figure is directing energy to the scene below.

(70) The title of this painting is "Sacrifice of the Head and the Heart." It has been shown at U.C.L.A. on the front of the Fred S. Wight Art Gallery in January 1978 and at the "East Los" Gallery on Whittier Boulevard in East Los Angeles in June 1979.

(71) The last set of slides deal with my tile work; that is painting with ceramic oxides and glazes on handmade tile and firing it above 2000⁰ F. (72) The work you are seeing is a detail of 8' x 44' tile mural created in 1979 for the Plazita de Dolores in historic Pueblo Park in Los Angeles. The work was commissioned by the city's Department of Public Works, and was done in honor of Mexico's independence from Spain in 1810. Specifically the painting is of Father Hidalgo assembling his forces in front of the Church of Dolores. The slide on the screen is of a boy putting posters up on a building. (73) An expanded view of this scene of the mural's left side shows two horsemen representing Ignacio Allende, co-leader of the

independence, and Ignacio Perez, the messenger who carried the message to Father Hidalgo telling him of his imminent arrest.

(74) The mural is made up of over 300 one foot square tiles.

Here we see some townspeople who make up Hidalgo's army (75)

and Father Hidalgo himself with Juan Aldanna pointing to him.

Epimeno Gonzales, El "Cojo" Galvan stand in the middle with

Jose Morelos to the far left and Maria Tomasa Estevez y Salas

to the far right. At Father Hidalgo's right shoulder a standard

bearer holds (76) the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a symbol

for this and other revolutionary movements in Mexico. In this

slide we can see some of the incising of line that was done in

the fresh clay of the tile. (77) Here we have a view of the

expanded middle section with a view of the Church of Dolores in

the background. (78) To the left of the 54 year old creole

priest are indians conscripted into Hidalgo's army. (79) The motif

and design of corn is used behind the indian figures, an important

food stuff that has played an important role in the history and

development of Mexico. (80) To the far right of the mural a

group of indians huddle around some live coals while a woman makes tortillas. (81) The mural is done on a curved wall.(82)

The space directly in front of the mural is used for cultural events such as Los Angeles' upcoming 200 year anniversary.

A 100 year time capsule is buried directly in front of the mural containing slides and a tape documenting the mural's development.

(83) With this mural I created a brilliantly colored, lasting

(84) tribute to "La Independencia" and the historic "Grito" (85)

given by Father Hidalgo on September 15, 1810.

In closing (86), I show a photo of me with my 11 year old son, Ruben. He's the one with the bubble gum.

In the foregoing slides and narration I hope I have given you some sense of my work, its aesthetics and technical scope. During my career as a muralist I have had to work with businessmen, architects, engineers, politicians and other craftsmen and artists in order to realize a work of art. I can work with a committee in developing a ceramic or fresco mural for San Jose.

I maintain a studio capable of carrying on large scale ceramic and mural work. I want the opportunity to create a lasting work that is not only beautiful but speaks to the human condition of all people.

Respectfully submitted,

Eduardo Carrillo
November 21, 1980

EC:CV